

# Organizational Behaviour Reassessed

The Impact of Gender

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## 6 Leadership

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### Introduction

Leadership is an attribute that is highly prized in most organizations and this has resulted in the topic becoming one of the most extensively researched and debated in organizational behaviour (Bass and Avolio, 1997). Yet studies rarely analyse sex or sex roles. We read as if leaders have no sex. However, on close reading of these texts it is quite apparent that when we read about leadership theory we are identifying with forms and realizations of 'idealized masculinity' (Oseen, 1997: 170). Very little research has examined the relationship between masculinity and femininity and leadership. The chapter begins by presenting the organization and managerial contexts within which the interest in gender and leadership theorizing has developed. We then provide an overview of trait, behavioural and contingency leadership studies and highlight their gendered perspectives. The discussion in particular draws attention to the differences and complementary qualities of men and women leaders. Recent developments in gender and management theorizing are then addressed. The analysis of 'masculinity and management' questions the ways in which gender relations and management practices sustain the power of men in organizational hierarchies. The section on the 'feminization of management' debates the changing cultural and organizational preferences for female qualities. The chapter concludes by reviewing the first ever recorded story of a woman assigned a leadership role. The biblical tale of *Deborah and Barak* represents a creative and dynamic way to explore how women have, historically and socially, been assigned roles that emphasize their reproductive and sexual attributes. Many would argue this is still the case today.

### The context of women and leadership

The literature on management has failed to acknowledge that historically, and in different societies, leaders generally, and managers more specifically, have been predominantly men (Collinson and Hearn, 1994). Management is perceived as a male function. As Oseen highlights it is the 'sexually indifferent which obscures the sexually specific' (1997: 170). This is a major oversight because as workplace structures are changing, and as traditional hierarchical and command and control arrangements are disintegrating, working women are predicted to outnumber men by the beginning of the

twenty-first century, as well as continuing to make headway in many management occupations (see Table 6.1).

**Table 6.1** *Female executives by responsibility level*

Responsibility Level	1995	1996	1997	1998
Director	3.0	3.3	4.5	4.6
Function Head	5.8	6.8	8.3	10.7
Department Head	9.7	12.2	14.0	16.2
Section Leader	14.3	14.4	18.2	21.9

Source: 'The National Management Salary Survey', published by Remuneration Economics in association with Institute of Management, *National Salary Survey*, 1998: 3

The growing number of females in the workforce 'present a challenge to who we are as men and how we relate to men both to ourselves and to others' (Siedler, 1994: 215). Yet while women have increasingly become economically independent as they enter the workplace in a world that has been dominated by men, they have to fight and struggle with 'conditions of worklife that have been created by men, for men, with no consideration given to the women's attitude or point of view' (Damatteo, 1994: 21). It is disappointing that although women are playing a more active role in the labour market the majority are subjugated to lower level positions than service men. It is also significant that women are still often seen as commodities to be 'dehumanised, objectified, sold to and purchased by men' (Burrell, 1986: 89), and often represent sexual symbols or adornments supporting male leadership power and status. The aesthetics associated with women and professional managerial competence (Kanter, 1977) are clear signifiers of the roles they can expect to perform, usually reporting to and under a man.

If we examine any major text on leadership it will reveal a similar phenomenon: that gender is totally ignored as a pertinent issue. It does not constitute a relevant variable in the theory itself; it does not feature in the empirical validation of that theory and one will not find it referenced in the indices. That statement holds true to any theory on leadership, whether trait, situational, contingency, decision making or impact; whether formulated in the first part of this century, with the emergence of the Ohio and Michigan studies, or as late as the 1980s with the focus on transformational leadership. When one says 'ignored', that is not quite true. The implicit reading of any such text is that leadership equates with man-leadership. Up to the 1970s that would have been no more than a reflection of reality. There were no women in top positions to be found at the helm of public and corporate life in the Western world. (In the now defunct communist system, women held prominent positions in a wide range of social, communal and industrial roles, though that

did not materially change their position in society.) Classical texts such as Whyte's *The Organization Man* (1957) and Dalton's *Men who Manage* (1959) cannot be accused of chauvinism; they are representing the reality and prevailing values of their day. Dalton, in a thorough investigation of three enterprises, refers to women only in a footnote which provides a glimpse into the normative perception of the times: 'several female secretaries and clerks were helpful in this research. The potential contributions of persons in these roles are usually unappreciated. For where female secretaries are treated as intellectual menials, they are disposed to be communicative with those who show awareness of their insights' (1959: 275-6). Women, quite simply, were not seen to be relevant to a managerial/leadership context, except as in Whyte's encompassing social analysis, in the role of partners to men in such positions, thereby helping to sustain and perpetuate the paradigm of middle-class organizational (male) careers.

More surprising perhaps is that as late as the 1980s and beyond – well after the establishment of the feminist movement and the inroads women made into boardrooms, gender does not feature in the texts on leadership. Bennis and Nanus' *Leaders* (1985), possibly the best selling book on the topic (200,000 copies sold by 1990: Bennis, 1990), lists the following as influential figures in informing a theory of leadership: Moses; Pericles; Julius Caesar; Jesus Christ; Martin Luther; Niccolo Machiavelli; James Madison. They add the following as contemporary 'sources of wisdom': Gandhi; Lenin; Churchill; De Gaulle; Dean Acheson; Mao Tse-Tung; Chester Bernard; Martin Luther King Jr.; John Gardner and Henry Kissinger (1985: 3-4). While the American bias may be excused in a popular book aimed at the American market, the lack of any woman figure in these lists is puzzling. What about Helen of Troy, Cleopatra, Elizabeth I, Isabella of Spain, Yakhaterina the Great, Madame Pompadour and among our contemporaries: Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, Eleanor Roosevelt, as examples of prominent female leaders who stirred the world. Bennis and Nanus (1985) are typical in overlooking women's contributions to business organization and business success as relevant sources of leadership theory formulation. Figures like Mary Kay Ash, Steve Shirley and Anita Roddick have been pioneers in creating new businesses, in advancing new organizational forms and contributing to business thinking. The bias in management literature towards 'big' business (e.g. Drucker's (1973) standard text) withholds recognition from those who are leaders of middle-sized enterprises, among them prominent women who are well in the public limelight.

One way of interpreting all that is, quite rightly, as an unwritten agenda of male domination to exclude women from discourses on power, related to their exclusion from positions of power. Yet, the 'fault' in the neglect of gender as a relevant factor in the study of leadership may well lie in the general and historical approach to the subject. Leadership, as an empirical genre of study, has focused on the task of leading and managing resources, even when consideration was given to the mobilization of people as 'people' not just as

resources. That is, the leader him/her self was neglected as an issue. Emphases changed over the past sixty years and have been variably placed on the *situation* (Hersey and Blanchard, 1994) the *interaction* (Fiedler, 1967; Blake and Mouton, 1964), and the *influence process* (Yukl, 1994). Or, in other words, what Zuboff labelled, 'the pre-eminence of action centred skills' (1989: 102), which is the name of one theory, emanating from the armed forces and rather popular in the United Kingdom (Adair, 1973). Even in the treatment of charismatic and transformative leadership the onus is not on the person of the leader, rather the relations with followers. From an agency perspective, the person of the leader has been, by and large, treated as a void. The person as an agent of signification (Silverman, 1970) has taken on selected meanings in the study of leadership. Gender is not one of them.

### Trait, behavioural and contingency theories of leadership

#### Trait theories

Most of the early leadership in the 1930s and 1940s used a trait theory approach based on the premise that successful leaders would possess distinguishable characteristics not found in their followers. Stodgill (1948 in Tosi et al., 1990) for example argued that leaders were more likely to display *intelligence, superior judgement, decisiveness* and have a high need for *achievement*. Trait approaches also linked physical characteristics such as weight, height, physique and energy to effective leadership. The emphasis on physical stature and body strength is not surprising given the minimum requirements for law enforcement and military occupations. These results signify why the majority of leaders are men and there has been little research on the relationship between masculinity or femininity and leadership. Women are generally afforded a lower status in the public sphere and are seen to occupy the domestic sphere by virtue of their reproductive capacities. Overall women are perceived (stereotypically) as less intelligent, emotional and therefore irrational. Physically they do not have the same presence or strength and power of men.

The traits of female leaders have been overlooked as it has generally been the case that for women to succeed they should conform to the cultural practices and behavioural characteristics prevalent in masculine dominated organizations (see White et al., 1997). Maddock and Parkin's (1993) research on gendered organization cultures highlighted how contextual and social differences in male management behaviour resulted in women struggling to convey both appropriate female behaviours and also valued management competence. In particular, Maddock and Parkin refer to the pre-eminence of a *gentlemen's* culture which acknowledges the special skills and abilities of women in a deferential way. Women are perceived very much as 'ladies' and

play a key role in 'supporting' male management decision making. In *locker room* cultures the emphasis on 'male bonding and sporting relationships between men serves to exclude women from the men's club. Inclusion may mean women are expected to attend football matches, play golf and cricket and partake in male sexual banter and joking that often undermines women, and treats them nothing less than as a sexual object. Women are thus forced to 'play the game' and compromise their feminine identity. Where the emphasis is on leadership traits representing different representations of 'idealised masculinity' (the gentlemen or lad) it is problematic for women who have to juggle being a woman as well as a competent management professional.

### *Behavioural theories*

An alternative approach would be to focus on the behavioural styles of leaders. Behavioural models suggest that effective leaders help their subordinates achieve goals in two ways: first by having task centred relations that focus on the quantity and quality of work; and second by being considerate and supportive of subordinates' needs and personal ambitions. The Ohio studies led to the classification of leadership styles in terms of initiating structure and consideration (Stodgill and Caan, 1957 in Tosi et al., 1990). Initiating structure focuses on the degree to which the leader assigns tasks, schedules work, and specifies procedures for the group members (task orientation). Consideration is defined as the degree to which the leader facilitates support, warmth and trust amongst his/her followers. Along similar lines a two dimensional classification was developed in the Michigan studies. Research by Likert (1961 in Grint, 1997) explained leadership in terms of leaders who were employee centred or production centred. The production centred leaders were those who defined precise work tasks and specified exact work standards. The employee centred leaders involved the subordinates in goal setting and decision making. Despite the differences in terminology the concept of autocratic and democratic leadership styles is clearly evident in behavioural theories. Eagly and Johnson (1990) and Eagly et al. (1992) recently pointed out that skill in interpersonal interaction may naturally lead to a management style that is democratic and participative, whereas those leaders lacking interpersonal skills would be more likely to be autocratic in their style. Given this it is surprising that little research on leadership styles and the dichotomy between autocratic and democratic has not considered gender as a relevant variable in shaping leadership behaviour.

A recent study by Luthar (1996) considered the gender differences in the evaluation of performance and leadership ability utilizing the autocratic – democratic manager framework. Luthar (1996) found that identical leadership style may be seen differently depending on the gender of the manager exhibiting that style (see Eagly et al., 1992). Indeed the view that female leaders are reacted to both in terms of their sex and their managerial position

in the organization is consistent with the idea of 'sex-role spillover' discussed by Gutek and Marsh (1982 in Luthar, 1996). Sex-role spillover refers to the gender based expectations for behaviour that are irrelevant or inappropriate to work. In this sense women are more likely to suffer the consequences of the effects of sex-role spillover because male managers do not often experience incompatible role expectations.

Luthar's (1996) research found that in general democratic managers are rated higher performers than autocratic managers and this is consistent with earlier studies (Eagly et al., 1992). Interestingly, autocratic female managers were rated higher than autocratic male managers. This evaluation was greater among the female subjects. In contrast female subjects gave autocratic male managers low evaluations and judged them to be inferior leaders. Luthar (1996) suggests that perceptions of appropriate gender roles may be changing to the extent that females feel comfortable negatively evaluating an autocratic male leader and positively supporting a female autocratic leader. Theoretically the study is interesting as autocratic behaviour may not always put a female leader at a disadvantage. However, an earlier study by Eagly et al. (1992) found that autocratic female leaders will be devalued compared to autocratic male leaders.

While behavioural theories have provided an insight into the relationships between employees and leader their principal limitation is that they have paid little attention to the situation in which the relationships occurred and its effects on leadership style. Do different situations/contexts account for the success of the different leadership styles? The importance of the situation formed the basis of contingency models of leadership.

### *Contingency theories*

Contingency theorists evaluate the variables that make certain leadership characteristics and behaviours effective in a specific organization context (Hellriegel et al., 1995; Hersey and Blanchard, 1994; Tosi et al., 1990). The contingency variables most often used are: first, a leader's personal characteristics; second, employees' personal characteristics; third, the group's characteristics; and fourth, the structure of the organization. Fiedler's (1967) contingency model specifies that performance is contingent on the leader's motivational system and the extent to which the leader controls the situation. The principal effect on group performance is the leader's Least Preferred Co-worker Score, but this can be mediated by contingent variables of group atmosphere, task structure and position power (Hellriegel et al., 1995).

Fiedler (1967) developed the Least Preferred Co-Worker (LPC) Scale to measure leadership style. Ratings are obtained by asking them to think about all the people they have worked with and then describe the person with whom they worked least well. Scales cover characteristics such as pleasant-unpleasant; accepting-rejecting; relaxed-tense; close-distant and so on. Low

LPC leaders tend to describe their colleagues in negative terms, and are primarily motivated by the achievement of the task. High LPC leaders describe their colleagues in a more positive way. They are motivated by establishing and maintaining close interpersonal relationships with subordinates. So which style is more effective? Fiedler's (1967) answer is that it all depends on the situation factors; and the degree to which the situation is favourable to the leader.

Given the emphasis on the 'situation' it is surprising that gender as a variable has not been considered. The working environment (group atmosphere) is undoubtedly affected by all female/all male/mixed sexed groups as indeed are dominant organization cultures (see Maddock and Parkin, 1993). Rosener (1997) for example refers to the concept of 'sexual static' which encompasses an array of misunderstandings in the workplace which cause frustration for women and discomfort for men. In essence men and women work differently and deal with work problems in different ways. She cites role confusion; garbled communication and culture clashes to articulate the differences in men and women's work experiences. Role confusion refers to the tensions that both men and women feel as their workplace and societal roles are changing. Communication stresses the differences in male and female communication patterns. Women communicate in a way that exchanges feelings and creates personal relationships. Men communicate to establish their status and show independence. Culture clash conveys the difference between male and female cultural values.

Individually and collectively the above generate 'sexual static' and unquestionably impact work attitudes/working relationships and the overall organizational climate.

When we talk of position power it is easy to conceptualize the phrase exclusively as something belonging to men. Men are socialized to believe that they have the right to influence and this is supported by the historical dominance of men in organizations. Within the discourses of contemporary organization analysis men are associated as '...in power, with power, and of power' (Kimmel, 1994 in Telford, 1996). Kanter (1977) argues women are more likely than men to be in lower level positions, are often outside the malestream work networks and relationships, and therefore have minimal power and influence. Attempts then to articulate women, leadership and power are problematic as it is assumed that women are more likely to exhibit powerlessness.

Whichever contingency model we analyse there is no consideration given to gender as a pertinent variable, and this is a key oversight given that women are increasingly taking on leadership roles. It could be argued that gender by itself has nothing to do with leadership theory *per se*. There are of course gender related attributes to leadership behaviour: strengths, preferences and tendencies that are gender based; and these will be elaborated later in this chapter. However, gender as a key variable does not necessarily inform a theory of leadership more than, say, personality or social class. We have neither

personality nor class based leadership theories. Why should we expect to have a gender based leadership theory? Because, ignoring the gender based nature of leadership discourse would be a major omission for it is underwritten by a male perspective (Burke and McKeen, 1996).

### Gender differences and managerial leadership: 'plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose'

One attempt to overcome this inadequate treatment of gender in leadership theorizing can be found in the women in management literature. However the approach has tended to concentrate on the under-utilization of women's skills by emphasizing their personal 'nurturing' qualities and to advocate the need for advancing the number of women managers and 'feminine leadership styles' (Rosener, 1990; Alimo-Metcalf, 1994a, 1994b). Consultants and management trainers thus work on developing women's competencies so that they can more easily fit into the existing managerial structure or on highlighting the positive contributions and special feminine qualities of female managers. Yet this prescriptive analysis clearly can be seen as either 'blaming' women for not being like 'men' or for essentializing women's difference (Calas and Smircich, 1993). There is a persistent and frequently taken for granted assumption about the relationships between gender hierarchy and power in contemporary organizations (Collinson and Hearn, 1994; 1996). Theorizing in leadership has tended to link biological essentialism to leadership behaviour and represent idealized masculinity as the basis for, and the content of, the leader and leadership knowledge (Oseen, 1997). This weakness has been highlighted by many organizational theorists who treat the categories of sex and gender as distinct concepts, as discussed by Wilson (Chapter 1 in this volume).

This is a critical point when reviewing studies of gender and leadership for research clearly indicates that *gender* and not sex accounts for the socially learned traits and behaviours associated with, and, expected of men and women. Korabik (1990) argues that:

Leadership is a function of sex role orientation rather than biological sex. The demonstration that socialisation rather than biology is responsible for leadership style means that females should not be excluded from positions which require instrumental ability merely on the basis of their sex (283).

This does not mean the study of men and women and management and leadership is not problematic as we struggle to conceptualize notions of gender, sexuality and organization representation. Occupations are clearly sex-typed, since the characteristics required for professional advancement are those seen as more commonly held by the majority sex occupant (Schein et al., 1996; Burke and McKeen, 1996).

This was demonstrated by the early work of Schein (1973, 1975) who sought to examine the relationship between sex-role stereotypes and the perceived

personal characteristics of successful middle managers. Schein specifically tested the proposition that middle management effectiveness was correlated to the characteristics and attitudes associated with men rather than with women. 300 male and 167 female managers were asked to assess 92 descriptions and rate whether they were like men in general, women in general or successful middle managers. The Schein Descriptive Index (SDI) as it became known found that the analysis for both male and female respondents linked conclusively the ratings of men and management, and a non-significant relationship between women and management. Schein's early studies (1973, 1975) thus proved that 'psychological barriers' existed, in essence stereotypical perceptions about men and women's managerial abilities which made it difficult for women to progress in managerial work.

A repeat of Schein's work by Brenner et al. (1989) in the US found similar results as the original studies for male respondents. However female responses indicated managerial effectiveness as being related to female qualities. A similar conclusion was reached by Schein when she repeated her study in 1994 (Schein et al., 1996). Powell (1993) notes that while the perceptions of women managers have changed, they have not changed for male managers. This finding is significant. Although it indicates that male managers' attitudes and values have not changed, it marks a change for women's status and career aspirations for themselves as women. Clearly the feminist movement and the influence of anti-discriminatory legislative power and affirmative action in the United States has given women a stronger voice and confidence to compete with men on more equal terms. More recent studies by Schein et al. (1996) however indicate that the managerial sex-typing hypothesis is confirmed by females in every country except the US. Her study of 361 male and 228 female management students in Japan and China was compared to previous studies in the US, Great Britain and Germany (again using the SDI) and revealed that sex role stereotyping and 'think manager-think male' is a global phenomenon. Both men and women managers perceived that characteristics associated with managerial success were more likely to be held by men than women.

A different approach to exploring the nature of managerial stereotypes was taken by Butterfield and Powell (1979 in Powell, 1993) who focused not on masculine/feminine but on androgynous management styles. The study reported that 70 per cent of women and men respondents associate masculine traits with descriptions of a good manager. Less than 20 per cent of individuals described a good manager as androgynous and virtually no-one preferred a feminine good manager (Powell, 1993). A significant aspect of their work explored managerial effectiveness in terms of workers' and managers' stereotypical perceptions. They found that senior personnel were more likely to favour masculine traits, whereas subordinates preferred a more supportive work environment favoured by feminine traits. This provides one clear indication as to why women are so under represented at senior and executive levels in organizations.

It appears there is no escape from the sex trap. The attitudes of male managers are still prevalent at senior levels, and these deeply embedded sex-role prescriptions may well impact women's corporate and leadership development. Schein et al. assert that the 'think manager, think male' phenomenon can foster bias against women in managerial selection, placement, promotion and training decisions' (1996: 34). Given this, several studies have attempted to evaluate whether men are more likely to emerge as leaders; and to investigate the effects of gender role on leadership emergence.

Megargee's (1969) classic study used gender neutral tasks and masculine and feminine tasks to assess emergent leadership patterns. Using the California Personality Inventory subjects were selected by their dominance scale rating (higher dominance indicating stereotypically masculine traits). Megargee allocated gender neutral tasks and found that in mixed groups with high dominance men and low dominance women, the men emerged as leaders 88 per cent of the time. However in groups of high dominance women and low dominance men the women emerged as leaders only 25 per cent of the time. The same patterns emerged when a masculine task was used: men were more likely, irrespective of the group make-up, to emerge as leaders.

There are clear perceptions then about what women can do and achieve in a leadership position. The study implies women lead according to sex-role expertise, by utilizing appropriate feminine qualities (Megargee, 1969). A phenomenon of the 1980s and 1990s is the emergence of sexual expertise in relation to female leadership (Wentworth and Anderson, 1984; Calas and Smircich, 1993; Fondas, 1997). Women are seen to assume a leadership position where 'feminine' qualities such as diplomacy and counselling are called for. However men by comparison, are seen to assume leadership positions just because they are men. This is different to saying that female leaders display leadership effectiveness. Research thus indicates men are rated higher than women in leadership tasks, and that leadership emergence is directly related to perceived masculine characteristics (Kent and Moss, 1994). On the one hand there is evidence of women's leadership skills being valued. On the other it still appears leadership theorizing is still embedded within the framework of a masculine discourse.

The discussion so far has highlighted how research has focused on male management even when the subject is female. Rosener's (1990) research is heralded as a breakthrough study of American corporate leaders. Her work clearly identified differences in male and female leadership styles. Her research focused on a group of successful male and female leaders and how they enacted their managerial role. Both men and women in the study were in the same pay bracket and had endured similar work/family friction. She found that transformational leadership was associated with women who encouraged participation; shared information; praised employee performance and whose managerial style worked at building a conciliatory approach thereby fostering mutual respect. In contrast masculine or transactional styles embraced a more functional approach based on competitiveness and power, where relations were

reduced to commodities of exchange and business transactions. Men used rewards for effective performance and services rendered, and punishment/retribution for inadequate performance. Rosener (1990) argues that originally the first wave of female executives adhered to many of the established male 'rules of conduct' and the behavioural and attitudinal styles that men equated with success. However she believes that the rising generation of women leaders are successful not because they follow the characteristics and styles of men but because they are 'drawing on the skills and attitudes they developed from their shared experience as women' (Rosener, 1990: 120). Bass and Avolio's (1997) work supported Rosener's findings. Using the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) they found that women were rated higher on transformational qualities than men. They attributed this to the fact that for observed differences in leadership women tend to be more nurturing, interested in others, and more socially sensitive. As a consequence they are likely to be seen as more 'effective' (Bass and Avolio, 1997: 208) by both their female and male followers. Yet surely this approach appears to reinforce stereotypical representations of female qualities rather than advance our understanding of the skills, attitudes and behaviours of successful and unsuccessful leaders?

Like Dammateo (1994) we would argue that Rosener's (1990) studies are flawed as they support sex-role management identity, something which management theorists are trying to explain and conceptualize. Rosener, by emphasising 'soft' or relationship skills being associated with women, and 'hard' or transactional skills with men, neglects the way the construction of masculinity and femininity is organizationally constituted (Parkin, 1993; Hearn and Parkin, 1995). Nor does she acknowledge how the connection between sexuality, gender and power occurs in organizational structures and processes. As we highlighted earlier it is sex-role orientation, not biological sex, that determines leadership behaviour. Gender cannot represent only a dual classification; gender identities must be seen as complex and contextually defined (Hearn and Parkin, 1995; Collinson and Hearn, 1994).

The overall conclusion seems to be that the masculine is dominant and where we essentialize difference as in the case of Rosener (1990), the implication is that women lead not like men, but are lesser than men or men with a lack (Oseen, 1997). Women generally are evaluated unfairly in terms of leadership ability because people hold sex stereotypical beliefs and attitudes (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1994a, 1994b; Luthar, 1996). As we attempt to demonstrate, the gendered nature of managerial discourse is more complex than a focus on the simple dualisms of masculinity and femininity, and public versus private, since sexualities are never static but shift in accordance with organizational, historical and social processes, the personal construction of sexual identity, as well as sex-role perceptions of managerial/leadership competence. The following two sections on masculinity and management and the feminization of management attempt to unravel a greater critical sensitivity to the nature of the unities, differences, and interrelations, between men and women and leadership theorizing.

### Masculinity and management

Throughout this chapter we have discussed leadership theorizing and its implications/consequences for women. The discourses about management activity and managerial power and their effects rarely question the ways in which gender relations and managerial and leadership practices can often be mutually constituting and reproducing. Although we have highlighted that studies reveal that leadership skills are inherently related to masculine traits, this does not advance our understanding of the socially constructed notion of gender and its relationship to leadership activity. We also need to consider how specific masculinities are reproduced within, and between men, at senior levels in organizations; or indeed, the role masculinity plays in maintaining the elite power of managers in organizations (Collinson and Hearn, 1994; Hearn and Parkin, 1995).

Kanter's seminal study *Men and Women of The Corporation* (1977) illustrates the organization dynamics through which the power of men and managers can be reproduced. She uses the term 'homosexual reproduction' (1977: 48) to describe the practices that exclude women from managerial posts. These practices include men selecting men in their own image because they perceive them to be more reliable, loyal and committed. The corporate expectations depict men as a head of the household and a family breadwinner. The importance of marriage and a supportive wife as a man progresses in the organization is an example of how men relate to, and identify, with specific management selection criteria. 'Homosocial reproduction' explains the ways individual men and managers are recruited in relation to their skill to be able to demonstrate appropriate social (manly?) characteristics. However the criteria for effective managerial performance is 'White and male, with a certain shiny, clean cut look' (1977: 42). Kanter suggests that this managerial profile unifies those male managers who invariably went to an elite school, and are Protestant and Republicans. The restricted social criteria thus serve to exclude and devalue different/shifting types of masculine social identity in organizations. Kanter's concepts of homosexual and homosocial reproduction are useful in depicting how men use their power *with* and *over* men, and how the differences between men themselves can also characterize the nature of gendered discourses, networks and practices of management and organizations.

A more recent study of men and management and organizations by Collinson and Hearn (1994) outlines a variety of different practices and discourses that illustrates how masculinities are shaped contextually and highlights what brings men together and what differentiates them. These include: i) authoritarianism, in which aggressive and violent behaviour by men is reinforced; ii) paternalism, in which traditional roles/co-operation are emphasized. This can include for example younger men separating themselves from women and identifying with older men, and attempts to position women in a supporting role; iii) informalism, where informal relationships and

contacts are emphasized either through sport or drinking; iv) careerism, in which concern for competition and achievement are clear signifiers of image and success and of being a man.

The studies by Kanter (1977) and Collinson and Hearn (1994; 1996) reveal how particular forms of masculinity are constructed and exist in relation both to femininity and other forms of masculinity. In this sense we can see how different masculinities are shaped and embedded in organizational practices that may be classified as 'hegemonic or subordinate'. As Hearn and Parkin state 'these masculinities are not fixed, but continually shifting. They have been shown to be culturally and historically contingent' (1995: 6).

The mention of cultural, historical and contingent factors is important if we consider the evolutionary process of management and leadership practices and of the 'preferred or complementary' behaviours required to support specific relations of production. The following section explores the issues surrounding the debate on the 'Feminization of Management' which has been presented as a cultural force influencing the management professional, and is particularly suited to new economic/work structures.

### Feminization of management

The increased emphasis on new wave management techniques highlighting the importance of employee involvement, interpersonal and teamworking skills, and empowerment have highlighted personal characteristics and behaviours such as counselling, coaching, nurturing, and collaborating. These characteristics are traditionally associated with women with growing evidence pointing towards business requiring a more feminine approach to management (Lee, 1994; Lorenzon, 1996; Fondas, 1997). These developments towards feminized leadership styles reassert the feminist voice that men's competitive behaviours and attitudes need to change. Lee goes as far as to assert that there is a new model emerging, one that emphasizes 'persuasion over power, co-operation over competition, and inclusion over exclusion' (1994: 4).

The process of feminization however is not so clear cut. What is it that feminization really means? In the context of leadership it refers to the tendency by organization theorists and management practitioners to describe managerial work in terms of qualities defined as traditionally feminine. However as Lee asserts 'identifying a talent to nurture participation and inclusion as a female strength is not the same as assigning that ability to the exclusive domain of women' (1994: 28), and in no way does the feminization of management mean that women's style is more effective. Rosener (1990) comments significantly that when a participative style was considered deficient, it was considered female, but that now it is seen as effective we see it as 'non-gender related'. This critique is built upon by Fondas (1997) who argues that the 'unveiling' of the feminine has not been explicitly named by organizational scholars.

Fondas' (1997) analysis is significant; she acknowledges writers such as Peters (1987), Kanter (1989) and Champy (1994) who advocate supporting, nurturing and mentoring qualities, and the adoption of more interactional, relational and participatory styles; however she writes they do so by concluding that females are suited to managerial work in contemporary organization settings and that males also need to develop more female leadership traits. Fondas (1997) proposes that there are characteristics that are culturally associated with females appearing in descriptions of managerial work in the texts of contemporary writers, and that these texts function as carriers of a 'feminine ethos' to practising managers.

This is different to saying that managers need to adopt a more feminine leadership style. Fondas (1997) reveals how the unnamed 'feminine ethos' is embedded within contemporary management practices. Fondas explores through textual analysis three management texts. *Managing for Excellence* (Bradford and Cohen, 1984), *Leading Self Directed Work Teams* (Fisher, 1993) and *Re-engineering Management* (Champy, 1994) and uncovers a number of feminization themes. She highlights how managers are 'told' not to command and control but to nurture and support people. This involves sharing power, often associated with femininity, and relinquishing power over people, traditionally equated with masculinity. Managers are also 'told' via those feminized cultural messages to focus on helping and developing others in order to demonstrate their responsiveness and sensitivity to people's needs and motivations. This role incorporates the movement away from self interest towards relationship building, characterized by mutuality, co-operation and affiliation. A third theme that Fondas draws from the texts is the need for managers to build a connected network of relationships where managers work *with* subordinates in achieving shared goals and also in developing mutually supportive partnerships. This female culture of 'affiliation and collaboration' is in direct contrast to the male culture of 'competition and hierarchy' (Fondas, 1997: 268).

Fondas' analysis is important as she provides examples of writers 'invoking' feminine qualities in their descriptions of managerial work. These texts represent 'cultural carriers' that 'legitimise the feminine ethos, thereby initiating its institutionalisation as managers and organizations adapt the practices the writers describe' (1997: 269).

In the early texts on management first referred to in this chapter (Whyte, 1957; Dalton, 1959; Bennis and Nanus, 1985), it was rare to find practices that hinted at feminization because they were probably not acceptable. By contrast throughout the 1990s and on the brink of the millennium the social organization of work emphasizes partnership and non-hierarchical work modes where specific feminine traits are admired. As Calas and Smircich (1993) highlight, global competition is the context within which feminine characteristics are socially acceptable in men and women. Fondas rightly argues 'Why are the authors willing to use potent feminine imagery but not the name?' (1997: 272). The emphasis on the feminization of management



reinforces traditional masculine discourses on management, because feminine identity is constructed under patriarchy 'extending patriarchal family's female role from the private to the public domain' (Calas and Smircich, 1993: 74). Fondas asserts that to recognize and name feminization is a 'complete reversal of femininity to masculinity in management discourse' (1997: 273). In this sense we should be sensitive to the difference between describing a feminized manager or a managerial role and the way that role is executed. Thus women can be themselves in a managerial capacity *only* because men perceive it is beneficial to patriarchal and organizational systems. We would argue therefore that feminization has not elevated the status of women's abilities and qualities, and that women and their special qualities are still being defined and constructed in relation to, and in support of, men and leadership. As Wajcman (1996) argues, the revaluing of the female style will not necessarily improve women's prospects of success. Men will probably adopt these female qualities to complement their traditional male ones, and 'Whereas men will be seen as adding new qualities to those they are already deemed to have, women will continue to be seen as only offering these qualities' (1996: 347).

The following biblical tale in particular draws on the nature of feminine traits and how they can support men in leadership positions.

### Deborah and Barak

The story of Deborah is significant in the historical narrative on leadership as it is the first recorded account in the old testament of a woman leader. The Bible, of course, is the single most influential text in the making of Western civilization. It is therefore of interest to follow through the narrative closely and reflect on the position of the narrator vis-a-vis the question of leadership and gender. By doing so we gain an insight into the gendering of leadership, perhaps at its very inception. The story is set in the period immediately following the settlement of the ancient Hebrews in the land of Israel, about 1200 BC. That period was characterized by a loose tribal confederation without a central unifying authority. From time to time Judges (as they become to be known) rose to rule over some of the tribes in their regions as well as to lead them to war with their enemy and become spiritual figures who spoke the Word of God. Figures like Gideon, Samson and Samuel are among the most notable leaders in the Old Testament. Deborah stands out as the only woman leader in the triple role of judge, prophet and warlord. This is how the Bible tells her story.

After Ehud died, the people of Israel sinned against the LORD again. So the LORD let them be conquered by Jabin, a Canaanite King who ruled in the city of Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived at Harosheth-of-the Gentiles. Jabin had 900 iron chariots, and he ruled the people of Israel with cruelty and violence for twenty years. Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help.

Now Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, was a prophet, and she was serving as a judge for the Israelites at that time. She used to sit under a certain palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel would go there for her decisions. One day she sent for Barak son of Abinoam from the city of Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, 'the LORD, the God of Israel, has given you this command: "Take ten thousand men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them to Mount Tabor. I will bring Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, to fight against you at the River Kishon. He will have his chariots and soldiers, but I will give you victory over him."' "

Then Barak replied, 'I will go if you go with me, but if you don't go with me, I won't go either'.

She answered, 'All right, I will go with you, however, you won't get any credit for the victory, because the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman.' So Deborah set off for Kedesh with Barak. Barak called the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh, and 10,000 men followed him. Deborah went with him.

In the meantime Heber the Kenite had set up his tent close to Kedesh near the oak tree at Zaanannim. He had moved away from the other Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses.

When Sisera learnt that Barak had gone up to Mount Tabor, he called out his 900 iron chariots and all his men, and sent them from Harosheth-of-the-Gentiles to the River Kishon.

Then Deborah said to Barak, 'Go! The LORD is leading you! Today he has given you victory over Sisera.' So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with his 10,000 men. When Barak attacked with his army, the LORD threw Sisera into confusion together with all his chariots and men. Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot. Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth-of-the-Gentiles, and Sisera's whole army was killed. Not a man was left.

Sisera ran away to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because King Jabin of Hazor was at peace with Heber's family. Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, 'Come in, sir; come into my tent. Don't be afraid'. So he went in, and she hid him behind a curtain. He said to her, 'Please give me a drink of water; I'm thirsty.' She opened a leather bag of milk, gave him a drink, and hid him again. Then he told her, 'Stand at the door of the tent, and if anyone comes and asks you if someone is here, say no.'

Sisera was so tired that he fell sound asleep. Then Jael took a hammer and a tent peg, went up to him quietly, and killed him by driving the peg right through the side of his head and into the ground. When Barak came looking for Sisera, Jael went out to meet him and said to him, 'Come here! I'll show you the man you're looking for.' So he went in with her, and there was Sisera on the ground, dead, with the tent peg through his head.

That day God gave the Israelites victory over Jabin, the Canaanite king. They pressed harder and harder against him until they destroyed him.

*The Song of Deborah and Barak*

On that day Deborah and Barak son  
of Abinoam sang this song:  
Praise the LORD!

The Israelites were determined to  
fight;  
the people gladly volunteered.  
Listen, you kings!

Pay attention, you rulers!  
I will sing, I will play music  
to Israel's God, the LORD.  
LORD, when you left the mountains  
of Seir,  
when you came out of the region  
of Edom,  
the earth shook, and rain fell from  
the sky.  
Yes, water poured down from the  
clouds.

The mountains quaked before the  
LORD of Sinai,  
before the LORD, the God of Israel.  
In the days of Shamgar son of Anath,  
in the days of Jael,  
caravans no longer went through the  
land,  
and travellers used the side roads.  
The towns of Israel stood  
abandoned, Deborah;  
they stood empty until you came,  
came like a mother for Israel.  
Then there was war in the land  
when the Israelites chose new gods.  
Of the forty thousand men in Israel,  
did anyone carry shield or spear?  
My heart is with the commanders of  
Israel,  
with the people who gladly  
volunteered.  
Praise the LORD!

Tell of it, you that ride on white  
donkeys,  
sitting on saddles,  
and you that must walk wherever  
you go.

Listen! The noisy crowds round the

wells  
are telling of the LORD's victories,  
the victories of Israel's people!

Then the LORD's people marched  
down from their cities.  
Lead on, Deborah, lead on!  
Lead on! Sing a song! Lead on!  
Forward, Barak son of Abinoam,  
lead your captives away!  
Then the faithful ones came down to  
their leaders;  
the LORD's people came to him  
ready to fight.  
They came from Ephraim into the  
valley,  
behind the tribe of Benjamin and  
its people.  
The commanders came down from  
Machir,  
the officers down from Zebulun.  
The leaders of Issachar came with  
Deborah;  
yes, Issachar came and Barak too,  
and they followed him into the  
valley.  
But the tribe of Reuben was divided,  
they could not decide whether to  
come.  
Why did they stay behind with the  
sheep?  
To listen to shepherds calling the  
flocks?  
Yes, the tribe of Reuben was divided,  
they could not decide whether to  
come.  
The tribe of Gad stayed east of the  
Jordan,  
and the tribe of Dan remained by  
the ships.  
The tribe of Asher stayed by the coast,  
they remained along the shore.  
But the people of Zebulun and  
Naphtali  
risked their lives on the battlefield.

At Taanach, by the stream of Megiddo,  
the kings came and fought;

the kings of Canaan fought,  
but they took no silver away.  
The stars fought from the sky;  
as they moved across the sky,  
they fought against Sisera.  
A flood in the Kishon swept them  
away —  
the onrushing River Kishon.  
I shall march, march on, with strength!  
Then the horses came galloping on,  
stamping the ground with their  
hooves.  
"Put a curse on Meroz," says the  
angel of the LORD,  
'a curse, a curse on those who live  
there.  
They did not come to help the LORD,  
come as soldiers to fight for him.'

Be blessed, of all women Jael,  
the wife of Heber the Kenite -  
be blessed of women who  
live in tents.  
Sisera asked for water,  
milk she gave;  
Brought him cream in a  
masters bowl.  
She took a tent peg in one hand,  
a workman's hammer in her right;  
she struck Sisera and crushed his  
skull;  
she pierced him through his temple.  
Between her legs,  
he sank to his knees;  
fell down and lay between her legs,  
he fell to the ground, slayed.

Sisera's mother looked out of the  
window;  
she gazed from behind the lattice.  
'Why is his chariot so late in  
coming?' she asked.  
'Why are his horses so slow to  
return?'  
Her wisest ladies answered her,  
and she told herself over and over,

'They are only finding things to  
capture and divide,  
a women or two for every soldier,

rich cloth for Sisera,  
embroidered pieces for the neck of  
the queen.'

May all your enemies die like that,  
O LORD,  
but may your friends shine like the  
rising sun!

And there was peace in the land for  
40 years.

*Source: Good News Bible (1994),  
American Bible Society,  
HarperCollins Publishers UK,  
published with permission of  
HarperCollins. Alterations to match  
the Hebrew original made by the  
second author.*

## Discussion and conclusions

Deborah, as formidable a figure as she was, is set within a males' universe. To start with, she is presented as someone's wife; which is the proper naming in the bible of women in a patriarchal society (and, in that respect, is no more than a naming). The careful reader will note that Lappidoth, Deborah's husband, is mentioned only once in the text. Significantly, the expression 'a Lappidoth's wife' has in Hebrew become synonymous with a resourceful and outgoing wife. Still, the bible does not ungender Deborah. She is presented clearly as a 'woman prophet', though this is implicitly clear from both her home and her position as married to a man (the tale makes a point she is a woman). She is a prophet, a judge, but, how interesting, not quite a combatant. Though she heralds the war against the Jabin and commands it strategically, the assistance of Barak her male counter-part is required to execute the actual battle plan. This is presented as a state of symbiosis in what became a key-phrase of the narrative. Barak says to Deborah; 'I will go if you go with me, but if you don't go with me, I won't go either' (verse 8). Deborah's reply is significant; 'All right, I will go with you, however you won't get any credit for the victory because the Lord will hand Sisera over to a woman' (verse 9), alluding to the second heroine figure of the tale: Jael. Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, complements Deborah in the tale through her active involvement in the slaying of Sisera, the commander-in-chief of Jabin's army, thereby contributing to the decisive victory of the Israelites.

The story of Deborah and Barak, and of Jael raises important issues regarding women's experience of leadership and management. Although the women are clearly represented as courageous, and, as such heroines, the tale hallmarks the confines of a female in a battle (organization) context. Deborah and Jael clearly do not challenge the conventional malestream and hierarchical notions of leadership. The bible's position is clearly spelled out. A woman can become a leader in her own right, and may assume most, but not all of a man's leadership roles: there is a domain, that of war, which is an all male domain. Is there much difference if we draw comparisons between the male executives in the boardroom in contemporary organizations? There is an inference that Barak by virtue of his manly strength has appropriate characteristics associated with leadership success, and in the modern corporation the persistence of organizational power relations reinforces dominant workplace masculinities. Throughout this chapter we have stressed that discourses of management frequently reflect masculine power and identity. Indeed throughout the history of management thought and practice there has been a recurrent association between gender hierarchy and organization on the one hand, and militarism and warfare on the other (Collinson and Hearn, 1996). Barak's warrior profile is a prime example of how management writers have tended to draw on military experience and language when formulating leadership theory (Grint, 1997).

The tale is also significant since it displays sexualized imagery pertaining to women, and also indicates the limitations of women's leadership ability in respect of her sexual identity. Deborah is portrayed as 'the mother of Israel' and provided her country and its people with appropriate nurture and support. The image of the 'mother' figure is of particular importance, Deborah can be seen to represent fertility, growth, sensitivity and warmth; she offers hope and a sense of rejuvenation as her people lament over their years of suffering:

The towns of Israel stood  
abandoned, Deborah;  
they stood empty till you came,  
came like a mother for Israel.

Her leadership style is depicted as participatory and supportive, she 'listens', she was appointed by the Lord God of Israel. In direct contrast the persona of Sisera is perceived as dictatorial and hard; his reign was characterized by pain and misery:

the earth shook, and rain fell from the sky.  
Yes water poured down from the  
clouds.

Sisera uses 'cruelty and violence' to rule the land. We can draw some comparisons with the work of feminist scholars who articulate men and women's different leadership styles by reference to stereotypical descriptions of male and female behaviour (see discussion on Rosener, 1990 above). Deborah can lead and help rebuild a nation, acknowledging women's reproductive and self-renewal qualities, but in more tough, competitive times she must submit to the strength and authority of a man, in the same way that women can be personnel managers or middle managers today, but the battles in the boardroom must remain the domain for men.

The story of Sisera's assassination and the role of Jael in defeating him is equally alive with sexualized and traditionally feminine imagery:

*Between her legs*  
he sank to his knees  
fell down and lay *between her legs* (author's emphasis)

Sisera's manly prowess is lost by seeking refuge in a woman's tent and hiding behind a curtain: his cowardly behaviour is manifested by association with a woman's world; inversely thus empowering Jael to command strength and be his match. Jael by seducing Sisera 'Come in, Sir; come into my tent', enchants him with her female allure. The reference to how Sisera fell 'between her legs' communicates powerful sexualized messages of how women can be successful if they use their sexual talents to win over men. The way Sisera 'sank' to his knees and 'fell down' emphasizes how men are seduced slowly, by female

sexual power. Her role is that of seductress and her special talents her female sexual energy and vitality. Many commentators have noted that female sexual power is the most defining feature of women's presence in organizations, their place is of aesthetic accessory or indeed through her sexedness, a femme fatale (Burrell, 1986; Hearn and Parkin, 1995). Even where female talents are valued and praised the story of Deborah and Barak does so in a way that confines women's role and abilities. Deborah is strong in a supportive sense, she assists but does not direct Barak's war plan. Jael is presented as a sexual commodity. Through creating feminized imagery the biblical tale of Deborah and Barak succeeds in essentializing the differences between men and women and supports gendered stereotypes of men and women.

### Conclusion

If stereotypical perceptions are still prevalent long after the first ever recorded account of a woman leader what can we conclude? Can we ever expect women to be equal when theorizing about leadership ability and effectiveness? The chapter has revealed that the link between leadership style and effectiveness is a tenuous one. Whereas previously management practitioners and organization consultants apparently preferred command-and-control type leadership approaches, the emphasis today on flatter organization structures, decentralization, and more advanced forms of open and two-way communication enhances the profile and status of more democratic and participatory styles. This is not to suggest of course that autocratic styles are not effective given the many examples of successful dictatorial leaders (both men and women, Marco Pierre White and Margaret Thatcher for example) in contemporary organizations.

And yet it appears that there is a silence about sexuality within management practices and discourses reinforcing supposed gender neutrality through organizational logic. When we 'unveil' (Fondas, 1997) the ways gendered identities are reproduced in management texts and practices men and masculinity appear to be privileged. This is particularly the case when we attempt to analyse leadership behaviour in organization settings. The literature discussed in this chapter linked management effectiveness and perceptions of management effectiveness to men and masculinities. The case of Deborah and Barak reinforced the unequal power relations between men and women and reduced women's role as an accessory to man, and as a sexual object supporting men. Will women continue to be treated as sexual commodities and tokens? And will they be able to challenge the conventional mainstream notions of management and leadership? It could be argued that women are trapped in a male culture where both women and men are socialized for certain roles and managers need to develop male characteristics. Marshall suggests that the question of differing abilities between the sexes will never be resolved until we move beyond the 'foundations in male experience and sex

role stereotypes,' (1995: 858). As Calas and Smircich (1993) and Marshall (1995) emphasize, the 'presence' of women in management may not be enough to break down the deeply entrenched attitudes that link masculinity to managerial power and status. Attempts to undo these stereotypes have primarily focused on the special (and different to men) qualities that women leaders possess, (Vinnicombe, 1987; Rosener, 1990; Alimo-Metcalfe, 1994a, 1994b). Where feminine qualities and skills are given pre-eminence they are done so under the veil of patriarchy, an issue Fondas (1997) highlights effectively. By preferring the feminine in contemporary texts we problematize the privileging of masculine in all areas of organization and management theory. We cannot be gender neutral since gender is part of the conceptualizations of management. Calas and Smircich suggest that we can only move forward when we begin to understand female sexuality by theorizing it in its own right, not in relation to men so that we 'recognize that gender no longer equals women – therefore the implicitly male gendered organizational theorizing practices get noticed – and recognizing that the implicitly male gendered organizational theorizing has kept women's voices silent – therefore women's voices begin to be written into organizational theorising' (Calas and Smircich, 1991: 235).

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